



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

More than 600 soldiers from National Guard infantry battalion returning from Iraq mission

Gov. Doyle, senior National Guard officials, families and military band to welcome troops back to Wisconsin Thursday, Saturday

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry is scheduled to begin returning home to Wisconsin this week. The battalion is expected to return to Volk Field aboard two aircraft, one scheduled to arrive Thursday evening and the other on Saturday afternoon.

The first group of about 300 soldiers is scheduled to arrive at Volk Field at approximately 9:00 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 17.

Soldiers will be greeted by Gov. Jim Doyle, senior Wisconsin National Guard officials and a military band — and also by up to 2,000 cheering family members who have been waiting for their return for more than a year.

The first flight will return soldiers assigned to the battalion's Company A, Waupun and Ripon, and most of the soldiers assigned to Company B in Green Bay. The returning Company A soldiers had been previously assigned to Troop E, 105th Cavalry in Merrill and Antigo, and the Onalaska-based 32nd Engineer Company. Soldiers who had been assigned to Company A before the mobilization were moved into Fond du Lac's Company C, which will return Saturday. Company B soldiers returning Thursday include soldiers who had been assigned to the battalion's Company D in Marinette.

The approximately 300 soldiers returning on the Saturday flight will include the balance of Company B's soldiers, soldiers from the battalion's headquarters in Appleton and the soldiers from Company C in Fond du Lac, which was augmented by soldiers from the armories in Waupun and Ripon. The Saturday flight is expected to arrive at Volk Field in the early afternoon and a separate news release with additional details will be issued on Thursday.

— more —

2-127th Infantry headed home this week

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2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry left Wisconsin June 9, 2005 and deployed to Kuwait in August 2005 following several months training at Camp Shelby, Miss. The battalion was based in Kuwait, but the unit's convoy security mission took them throughout Iraq as they escorted military and civilian convoys in armed and armored Humvee "gun trucks."

Three battalion soldiers were killed in action. Spc. Michael Wendling, 20, and Sgt. Andrew Wallace, 25, of Company C both died Sept. 26, 2005, after a roadside bomb exploded near their Humvee and they were attacked by small arms fire. Sgt. Ryan Jopek, 20, was killed just two weeks ago, on Aug. 2, 2006, while on his final convoy security mission. Jopek was transferred into Company A from his hometown unit, Merrill-based Troop E, 105th Cavalry.

Following an initial reunion with their families and a brief official "welcome home," the returning soldiers will travel to nearby Fort McCoy to begin several days of demobilization processing.

Following the redeployment of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, the Wisconsin National Guard will have about 1,950 soldiers and airmen serving on active duty. Of those, approximately 1,200 are deployed overseas and an additional 260 are bound for eventual overseas service in either Iraq or Kosovo.

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Note to Editors and News Directors:

THURSDAY EVENING RETURN

News media are welcome to cover the return of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry soldiers to Volk Field Thursday evening, Aug. 17. The flight is expected to arrive at the Air National Guard base sometime between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. Volk Field is located in Juneau County off Exit 55 on Interstate Highways 90-94 near Camp Douglas.

Following the aircraft's arrival, soldiers and their families will have about an hour together before the soldiers are bused to Fort McCoy to begin demobilization processing.

News media organizations wishing to cover the Volk Field arrival should call Tim Donovan (608-242-3050 or Cell 608-516-1777) so arrangements can be made for access to the military installation. News media will not be permitted on the base unless arrangements have been made in advance.

SATURDAY RETURN

A separate news release will be issued on Thursday which will provide additional information on the scheduled Saturday afternoon flight. News media will also be invited to cover this return by registering in advance for base access.

AIRCRAFT ARRIVAL TIME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

CALL 608-242-3059 FOR RECORDED SCHEDULE CHANGES.

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